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## CIVIL DEFENSE IN THE USSR

### I. Introduction

An organized civil defense system has existed in the USSR since World War II. Although the USSR was not severely tried by aerial attack during the war, foreign observers reported that the Soviet people stood the test well and that civil defense workers turned in a creditable performance. A post-war civil defense training program was initiated about 1947.

Until 1954, Soviet civil defense plans remained substantially the same as they were in World War II and continued to accent defense against conventional bombing and chemical attack. Since 1954, several important changes have taken place to include measures for protection against nuclear and other more advanced weapons.

### II. Organization

Civil defense in the USSR is a responsibility of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) which also controls the police (militia) and fire-fighting forces. A permanent command and staff organization for civil defense (MPVO -- Local Antiair Defense) is maintained. The senior civil defense official identified in the USSR is Lieutenant General G. V. Tolstikov, a First Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs.

Soviet civil defense organization parallels the structure of the government from the national to the city block or factory level. The MPVO system

utilizes numerous organizations and groups whose primary functions are not civil defense. MPVO units in cities use a nucleus of trained police, fire, medical, and other personnel with the probable addition of civilian auxiliaries. Each factory, farm, or housing unit in the USSR is obligated to form a "self-defense" group of civilian volunteers, usually about forty in number, who are organized into order, blackout, fire-fighting, first-aid, and other teams.

### III. Training

The training of these self-defense groups and the civil defense training of the civilian population is conducted principally by the paramilitary DOSAAF (Voluntary Society for Assistance to the Army, Air Force and Navy) aided by the Soviet Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Post-war civil defense training was initiated about 1947 with a goal of 5,000,000 trainees per year. Since 1955, this goal has been increased at least ten-fold, and instructional material has been added on defense against nuclear and biological weapons and defense against nerve gases. During the period 1955-1960, it was planned that the entire adult population of the USSR would complete three successive civil defense courses. According to Soviet publicity, some areas have completed or were pledged to complete this three-phase training by the end of 1959. However, many areas have lagged and the program has been plagued with public apathy, scarcity of teachers and training aids, and poorly qualified instructors. Vigorous press attacks against these shortcomings and a variety of concrete remedies taken to improve training in the USSR are evidence of genuine concern for the eventual success of the program. Additional training is planned.

#### IV. Construction

Soviet civil defense officials have had a voice in approving building plans and in city planning. Some of the broad streets, park areas and wide spaces between buildings which are characteristic of new Soviet city plans may thus be due in part to defense considerations.

More significantly, the majority of new Soviet housing construction consists of new masonry apartment dwellings, whose basements are readily adaptable as air raid shelters. Soviet civil defense literature contains designs of basement air raid shelters, and it has been reported that these are mandatory in new buildings. As designed, Soviet basement shelters are of masonry construction, gas-tight, and can be equipped with filter ventilating systems for defense against gas and radioactive dust.

Schematics of heavier air raid shelters, such as bunkers and tunnels have also appeared in Soviet literature. The use of subways as shelter is prescribed. The Moscow subway, which is still being expanded, sheltered as many as 750,000 people during the last war and was equipped then with steel doors and air filters.

Substantial shelters for the Soviet government have undoubtedly been provided, adding to and improving those which were prepared during World War II.

Those who do not have formal shelter available are instructed in how to build field-type, wood-lined trenches covered with about two feet of earth. These are to be constructed in parks and open areas or in rural regions upon government notification that a "threatening situation" exists.

#### V. Evacuation

Until 1958, known Soviet civil defense instructions advised everyone to use nearby shelter for air defense. Since then, it has been indicated that a

partial evacuation of cities may take place. This is described to include school children, old people, and other non-effectives. There is, as yet, no information as to how the evacuees will be protected from radioactive fallout.

VI. Conclusions

1. The USSR has a civil defense program which is long-term, but accelerating and adapting to defense against modern weapons since 1954.
2. Civil defense training and service are undoubtedly compulsory and civil defense authorities have some voice in construction affairs.
3. The character of new Soviet housing, concentrated in masonry apartment buildings, has given the USSR an opportunity to develop numerous basements adaptable as fallout shelter at relatively low cost.
4. Current indications are that civil defense is being given increased attention in the USSR -- no slackening of effort is discernible.